

Place Lurgan Baptist 31:8:2008

## WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

Reading: 1 Peter 4:1-6

### 13. LIVING ON FOREIGN SOIL

Several years ago there was stationed in the city of Karlsruhe, Germany about eleven thousand Americans who were connected with the army. Soldiers had brought their families and there were little American villages on the slopes of the Black Forest. Daily they would have listened to the American Forces Network Radio Station and those soldiers and wives were repeatedly urged to live exemplary lives. They were warned against the soldier's sins of wine, women, and winnings. The reason given was always the same. "***Don't forget you represent the United States of America.***" My .... do we forget at times where our citizenship lies? Paul says, "*for our conversation, or our citizenship is in heaven.*" ( Phil 3:20 ) Since our citizenship is in heaven, earth is not our home. For us, this is foreign soil. We are citizens of another realm.

Consequently, we need to be on our best behaviour, otherwise people will get a wrong perception of what our homeland is like. As a result of our conduct they will either be attracted to, or repelled by heaven. The old gospel song is bang on target.

***This world is not my home  
I'm just a passing through  
My treasure are laid up  
Somewhere beyond the blue***

That is so true, but it's so easy to forget. Do we not need to be reminded continually that we live in a pagan culture, surrounded by folk who embrace a pagan philosophy and a pagan way of life ? This is the world we live in and God has left us here for a purpose. We're here to show what it is like to be a member of another country, to have a citizenship in another land, so that we might create a desire for others to emigrate. Now in the opening verse of this chapter Peter gives some marching orders to Christian's soldiers who are stationed on foreign soil. Do you see how he begins ? "*Forasmuch then ....,*" or "*Therefore since Christ has suffered ....,*" and of course this word connects what Peter is about to write with what he has just written. And what has he just written ? Well he has told us "*For Christ also hath suffered for sins the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit .... Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.*"( 3:18, 22 )

Christ has suffered and died on our behalf. "*Therefore.*" Do you see how Peter is bringing it all together ? Since Christ has died for our sins, the just for the unjust, and since He has been seated at the right hand of God, and since all authorities have been subjected to Him, and since He has suffered in the flesh, therefore, we should arm

ourselves with the same purpose He had when He was on earth.” Scholars tell us that the phrase “*arm yourselves,*” was used of a Greek soldier putting on his armour and taking his weapons. You see, we are not living on this earth as carefree tourists. We are soldiers on pagan soil. We are living on foreign soil. The question is how? ***How are we to live on foreign soil? How are we to live effectively on foreign soil?*** Will let me give you three answers to that question flowing from this passage. We are to,

### **(1) APPRECIATE THE WORK OF CHRIST**

Do you appreciate the work of Christ? Do you ever take time to meditate on the work that He accomplished on the Cross? Do you ever ponder the different aspects of the Cross? You see, it is to the Cross that Peter takes us in this opening statement. The words “*suffered for us in the flesh,*” is similar to the phrase in ( 3:18 ) “*being put to death in the flesh.*” You see, we appreciate the work of Christ when we understand two great doctrines that flow out of this opening verse. The first is,

#### **(a) THE DOCTRINE OF SUBSTITUTION:**

Christ died for me. Peter has already mentioned this truth more than once in this letter. Do you recall way back in ( 2:24 ) he says, “*Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.*” Then in ( 3:18 ) “*Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.*” Now here again in ( 4:1 ) “*Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh.*”

Now that is the doctrine of substitution. That is the truth that Christ when He died on the Cross, took our place. He died for us. He died in our stead. Now God’s method of dealing with sin is always death. The Bible says, “*the wages of sin is death,*” ( Rom 6:23 ) ***That’s always God’s method of dealing with sin.*** You see, your sin personally will either be dealt with in the death of Christ, or you yourself will experience the second death for the terrible reality of sin. But the good news today is this. Christ is our substitute. The Lord Jesus did something wonderful for us at the Cross. He took our place there. So when the nails were driven into His hands, they should have been our hands. When the spear was thrust into His side, it should have been our side. When the crown of thorns was placed on His head it should have been our head. Now there is a sense in which what is said in the last part of ( 4:1 ) can also be said about Christ. “*He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.*” ***Now, how can Christ cease from something which He never began?***

I mean the Lord Jesus was sinlessly perfect and perfectly sinless. But you see, when He died on the Cross at Calvary He had nothing more to do with the sin question. He bore sin’s curse only once and for all. Do you recall those lovely words “*But this man after He had offered once sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.*” ( Heb 10:12 ) His relationship with our sin was terminated forever. It begs the question. Why then does Rome keep offering Him up in the sacrifice of the mass? Why does Rome keep associating our blessed Lord with sin? For Paul says, “*In that He died, He died unto sin once.*” ( Rom 6:10 ) (a)

## ***(b) THE DOCTRINE OF IDENTIFICATION:***

I died with Christ. Did you notice how Peter puts in ( 4:1 ) ? He says “ *Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.* ” Well, what mind. The mind of Christ. Well, what was the mind of Christ ? Well, Paul gives it to us in that classic passage in ( Phil 5:5 ) He says, “ *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God, thought it not be robbery to be equal with God.* ” Yet what did Christ do ? He “ *took upon Him the form of a servant .... He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death even the death of a cross.* ” So what Peter is saying here is that Christ died. Now arm yourself with the same attitude, the same mind in relationship to sin and then he says to us, “ *he that suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.* ” Now what in the world does that mean ? Well, Kenneth Wuest the Greek scholar tells, that literally it means “ *the Christian “ hath got release from sin.* ” Now he is not talking about sinless perfection. He is not saying that you are not going to sin anymore.

*Is there anyone here who has never sinned since you became a Christian ?* Peter is not saying that. But he is saying that because of the death of Christ and because of our identification with that death, sin's grip has been released upon us. Now the doctrine of substitution goes right alongside the doctrine of identification. Here's how you put them together. Substitution says Christ died for us. Identification says we died with Him. Is the victorious Christian life possible ? Yes. But there are two factors we need to take on board. There is,

## **1. The Historical Aspect:**

When Christ died I died. Do you recall Paul's words, “ *I am crucified with Christ,* ” ( Gal 2:20 ) or “ *I have been crucified with Christ.* ” When was Christ crucified ? Two thousand years ago. What about our flesh ? It was nailed to the Cross too. God says its been crucified. ( Gal 5:24 ) Its dead. Does this mean we will never yield to sinful desires anymore ? No. It means we don't have to. Paul says the same in ( Rom 6:6 ) “ *Knowing this that our man **was** crucified with Him.* You see, when Christ died on the cross you died to your sins so far as them dominating you anymore. Now a dead person is totally unresponsive to something. Is there anything deader than a dead person ? You go into a funeral home and there's a dead man in the coffin. You walk over to the coffin and lean over and say, “ *How are you doing ?* ” He doesn't say a word. You say, “ *Do you have a pen I could borrow ?* ” He doesn't respond. You see, a dead person doesn't respond. And when Christ died we died, therefore we do not have to respond to sin in that we are dead to sin. Now the fact that the believer died with Christ on the cross does not remove the sin nature or make it inoperative. You see, there is (1)

## **2. The Mental Aspect:**

That is, we must reckon ourselves dead to sin and this should be done continually by the Christian. Paul calls this “ *reckoning,* ” and the word “ *reckon,* ” is “ *to count, compute, to take into account.* ” My .... at Calvary Christ dealt fully and forever with all aspects of the question of

sin, but we have to “*reckon*,” this to be so. We have to take this into account in the moment of temptation. The story is told of two Irishmen, Pat and Mike, who found a most unusual turtle. The animal's head had been completely severed from its body, but the turtle was still running around as nothing had happened. Pat maintained that it was dead, but Mike denied it strongly and the argument waxed louder and louder until O'Brien came along. They decided that O'Brien should arbitrate the matter and that his verdict would be final. O'Brien took one look at this remarkable turtle and said, “*It's dead .... but it don't believe it.*” Is that not the problem with many of us who are believers? We are dead, but we do not believe it. My .... what a tragedy for it is this truth fully and unreservedly believed that breaks sin's stranglehold in the life once it is believed. How we are to live effectively on foreign soil? (1)

## (2) APPROPRIATE THE WILL OF GOD

Did you notice how Peter contrasts “*the will of the Gentiles*,” ( 3:3 ) with “*the will of God*,” ( 3:2 )? You see, he is making a contrast between the two lifestyles. There are only two different ways people can live. You can live your life according to the will of the Gentiles, the unsaved world, or you can live your life to the will of God. Now if we are going to live effectively on foreign soil then we do to appropriate God's will. In the context this involves two things. There is to be,

### (a) A RENUNCIATION OF SENSUAL DESIRES:

Peter calls those desires “*lusts*,” a strong word that means “*passionate longing*,” and in this setting refers to evil desires. There's a line in a country-western song that says, “*I'm not that way anymore, time has closed yesterdays door.*” My .... when you look at these verses thank God we can say, “*I'm not that way anymore, Christ has closed yesterdays door.*” But if you choose to live a life of sin, here's what you can expect.

### 1. It is a Wasted Life:

Look if you will at ( 4:2-3 ) What Peter is saying is this. He is saying now you are saved and you have lived long enough in that old life. You have wasted enough time as it is. It was enough and too long for a man who is now a believer to have spent his past, non-Christian days living as a pagan. You have wasted enough time as it is. How often folk who do not get saved until later years tell us that one of their big regrets is that they spent so many years in that old life of sin. *Isn't that right?* I mean you look back with regret and you say, “*My, that was plenty of time, that was more than enough time, I spent back there in sin.*” Now my .... if you want to waste your life and blow your life even as a professing Christian, you just spend it living according to the lusts of men and the will of the unsaved world. At the end of your life you may have to sing, “*Wasted years, wasted years oh how foolish.*” Tell me, are you wasting your years? Are you living for the temporal rather than the eternal? Are you living for this world rather than the world to come? Are you living for self rather than for the Lord? 1.

## 2. It is a Wicked Life:

Peter gets very specific here and he gets down to naming sins. That is certainly not the popular thing to do now. You are not supposed to name any sins anymore. I mean we are so general now. Like the preacher who got up and he said, “*now beloved, if you don't repent so to speak, you will go to hell as it were.*” That's just about how indefinite we are but not Peter. Do you see the six things that he itemizes in this catalogue of the lifestyle of our past ? He talks about,

### 1. Lasciviousness:

That means outrageous sin. It means sin that shocks public decency. I wonder have we lost the capacity to be shocked by sin ? Have we lost our capacity to be shocked by anything in this country ?

### 2. Lusts:

It means excessive sexual desire, but it goes beyond that and involves sinful desires of every kind, including the lust for revenge and the lust for money, that is greed.

### 3. Excess of Wine:

Or drunkenness it literally means “*wine bubbling up,*” and refers to habitual intoxication. Maybe Peter is referring to the tipling cocktail parties. Can I give you one piece of advice regarding alcohol ? Don't touch it.

Don't touch it. Then you will never be an alcoholic, then you will never ruin your testimony. For “*wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*” ( Prov 20:1 )

### 4. Revellings:

The word means “*wild parties which end in orgies.*” It was a word that was used to describe parades after the Olympic Games. After the games the victorious athletes would get involved in these parades and they would laugh and shout and it would go into the night and it just finally degenerate into a drunken brawl and sexual orgy.

### 5. Banquetings:

Really he is talking about drunken parties.

### 6. Abominable Idolatries:

He is speaking about the debauched worship of false gods. It's a wicked life. No restraint of human passions, no regard for God. Peter's words are as relevant as the morning newspaper as he describes scenes from our past. Do you see what Peter is forbidding ? He is saying. Don't be like the world. Don't let the world squeeze you into its mould. My .... is Satan and society pulling at your heart and enticing you into some kind of sensual involvement ? Are you being tempted to live like a child of the devil again ? Then boldly write down the name of that sin on paper, and look it straight in the face. Name it as Peter

does. Call it what Scripture calls it and see if you then can indulge. 1. 2.

### 3. It is a Wanton Life:

For look if you will at ( 4:4 ) Its just a picture of animals running from one garbage to another. It's the picture of people who have decided to blow their life and not save anything. Not save their health, not save their money, not save their character. He is talking about when life hits the gutter. Is that where you are now ? My .... if I have described your lifestyle today you can belong to this church or that church, you can be baptized, you can be added, you can have the whole thing, but if this is your constant lifestyle you're just fooling yourself, you are just heading down the sewer to hell. (a) But then,

#### **(b) A DEDICATION TO SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:**

What Peter calls "*the will of God.*" ( 4:2 ) Is this not the most glorious lifestyle that a believer can enjoy ? The will of God revealed in the Word of God is not drab, dull, or dreadful. Rather it a delight. It was that for the Saviour and it can be that for the saint. Paul says "*And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*"

( Rom 12:1 ) Is this not what Daniel did ? Down there in Babylon as a teenager they tempted him with the wine of this world, the women of this world, the wickedness of this world. But Daniel said no. The Bible says "*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile*

*himself with the portion of king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank.*" ( Dan 1:8 ) Do you want to live effectively on foreign soil ? (1) (2) Finally,

### **(3) ANTICIPATE THE WRATH OF MAN**

Do you know something ? When you start pleasing God, and living a life according to the will of God, your former friends are going to think you are off your rocker. Its interesting in these closing verses that Peter speaks of a three fold judgment. He talks about,

#### **(a) A FALSE JUDGMENT:**

The Judgment of the World, who will speak evil of you. The word can be translated "*malign,*" it means "*to blaspheme,*" "*to slander or defame someone.*" In Peter's day it was the Christians reluctance to participate in many ungodly civic ceremonies, their refusal to engage in idolatrous, immoral functions that caused unbelievers to hate and revile them. You see, unsaved folk do not understand the radical change we experience when we trust Christ. They do not think it strange when people wreck their bodies, destroy their homes and ruin their lives by running from one sin to another. But let a drunkard become sober, an immoral person become pure, and the family thinks he has lost his mind. "*What in the world is wrong with John ? Remember when we use to run around together ? Now he's got religion. Or Suzy's got really weird .... become a Bible thumper. She was once a ton of fun, Now she's Miss Goody Two Shoes.*"

Have you discovered that your close friends have changed now that you are in Christ ? Are they judging you ? You see, their problem is this. They see what you reject, but they don't see what you receive. They see you turning your back on that polluted pool of this old life, but they don't see you drinking from the fountain that never runs dry. So don't be overly alarmed when you experience false judgment. You see, our judgment is behind us, but their judgment is in front of them, for Peter speaks here of,

***(b) A FAITHFUL JUDGMENT:***

Who will give an account to the Judge ? The unsaved. For they are amassing a debt to God which they will spend all eternity paying back. My .... make no mistake about it, God will bring you to judgment. You see, there is no second chance after death. Some take ( 4:6 ) to mean that the gospel was preached to those who are dead and that means they have a second chance. But look carefully at the tense of the verb “ *for this cause was, past tense, the gospel preached to them that are, present tense, dead.* ” Peter is simply saying that are some believers who are now dead who had the gospel preached to them while they were still alive. They had become Christians and as a result of that “ *they had been judged according to men in the flesh,* ” that is they were physically put to death, but now in heaven they “ *live according to God in the spirit.* ” I just wonder tucked away in here was Peter thinking of,

***(c) A FINAL JUDGMENT:***

For the believer. You know our prospect is *Glorious:* For “ *this world is not our home, we're just a passing through.* ” D. L. Moody said, “ *One fair morning you will read in the newspaper that D. L. Moody is dead. Don't you believe it. I will be more alive than I have ever been before.* ” What a glorious prospect

***“ For ever with the Lord  
Amen so let it be  
Life from the dead is in that word  
Tis immortality***

But our Prospect is *Serious:* “ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.* ” ( 2 Cor 5:10 ) The Lord, the Judge will ask, “ *how did you live when you were on foreign soil ? Did you anticipate My Adversary ? Did you appropriate My Will ? Did you appreciate My Son ? Did you accomplish My Service ?* ”

***Sure I must fight if I would reign  
Increase my courage Lord  
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain  
Supported by Thy Word***

